

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6078

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Higher Education & Workforce Development, January 18, 2018

Title: An act relating to increasing opportunities for apprenticeships for inmates.

Brief Description: Creating an apprenticeship program for inmates.

Sponsors: Senators Palumbo, Darneille, Ranker, Saldaña, Hasegawa, Liias, Carlyle, Zeiger, Keiser, Wellman, O'Ban and Kuderer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/16/18, 1/18/18 [DP-WM].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes an apprenticeship pilot program at the Monroe Correctional Complex.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Ranker, Chair; Palumbo, Vice Chair; Hawkins, Ranking Member; Carlyle, Ericksen, Liias, Miloscia, Nelson and Short.

Staff: Alicia Kinne-Clawson (786-7407)

Background: Former prison offenders face substantial barriers after their release to attaining a living wage job. Prior criminal histories and lower educational levels compared to the general population are among the barriers to employment. A 2011 study by the Department of Corrections (DOC) found that one year after release, former offenders participating in academic degree programs from Walla Walla Community College reduced recidivism rates from 36 percent to 19.6 percent and increased employment levels from 15.7 percent to 25.5 percent.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Washington's community and technical colleges currently contract with DOC to provide basic education and job training at each of the state's 12 adult prisons. In 2015-16, 8960 incarcerated individuals participated in community college programs earning 544 GED certificates, 1709 vocational certificates, and 47 associates degrees.

Summary of Bill: The secretary of DOC must award \$100,000 annually to a nongovernmental agency experienced with apprenticeship training and employment navigation, to establish an apprenticeship pilot program at the Monroe Correctional Complex. The pilot program will last through December 31, 2022. The nongovernmental agency partner must provide former inmates with training, tools, and employment support to increase the likelihood participants complete their apprenticeships.

The nongovernmental agency partner must track key measures of success for the participating inmate for two years after their release and report on these measures to the Legislature by December 31, 2022.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 13, 2018.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This program would allow transitioning offenders to receive direct or preferred entry into an apprenticeship program. Apprenticeship & Non-Traditional Employment for Women (ANEW) is currently offering this program at the women's correctional facility. Transitioning offenders are assisted with tools and union dues as well as assisting with transportation to work. Retention in apprenticeships for program participants through ANEW is above average for apprenticeships without ANEW's support. The state board has been working over the last two years to expand the number of pre-apprenticeship programs at state prisons. We are supportive of the program and think that the committee should also consider selecting a prison in a rural district where access to jobs is different for transitioning offenders.

OTHER: We are supportive of the intent of the program. There is currently there is a highly successful model at the women's correctional facility. We are concerned that the program may become an unfunded mandate.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Ari Kohn, Post-Prison Education Program; Karen Dove, ANEW; Brian Walsh, Policy Associate, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

OTHER: Danielle Armbruster, Department of Corrections.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.